

19th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Oslo
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA AND HISTORY
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0900 - 1200: Audiovisual Media in the 21st Century: Access and Use

FIAT/IFTA ACCESS TO TELEVISION COLLECTIONS

The aim of The International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA) is to make it possible for the members to get access to archives worldwide. Researchers, teachers, professors and scientific working groups are members of FIAT/IFTA. It is important for them to make use of collections of transmitted audiovisual materials for different projects and for university studies in general. So far so good. We all agree on the aim and the demand for a radical change of policy mentioned. Why is it so difficult to make a change of archival policy to benefit a new group of active users? Why do television companies forward negative signals to well established university societies when requests of using the materials are scheduled? I will make an attempt to answer some of the questions and also to evaluate necessary actions to eliminate obstacles that make life difficult for the target group.

First of all let us face some facts concerning the members of FIAT/IFTA. I have made a quick study of the members of FIAT/IFTA. According to information published in FIAT's publication called "GUIDE TO AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES", eleventh edition 2000, 25 members have answered the question: Access for university studies or National responsibility with No. We do not advocate for a policy for those who want to use the collections for university studies and we do not work for a policy for national responsibility. Anyway 69 members had a different approach to the issue. The answer was yes. We accept the policy and the demand for new users of the collections. Among the members of the so-called "YES GROUP" I observed that they did not published the policy without a hesitation to do so. Limited use, by appointment, by request of mentioned university are keywords used to explain the reluctant to go all the way for the researchers and professors who want to make use of transmitted and untransmitted television programmes or shots from programmes. Among the negative members of the tribe of free access to materials I was reminded of my own company's approach to the policy. The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation answered the question with a NO. And let me explain why NRK and 24 other FIAT members do not show a passion for the teachers and professors and students working with their master degrees?

First of all let us face the reason for why the television companies established an archive at all:

- To keep their own productions to be transmitted when the company wanted to do so
- To make copies of parts of the programmes to be used in new productions.
- To produce better programmes, increase the quality of the news and documentary programmes by making use of the visual history, shots and interviews.
- To sell programmes or parts of programmes for financial reasons
- To make better programmes by using old materials in competitions with other tv stations.

What about the scholars, the teachers and the students: How is it possible to establish a service for the mentioned groups? And we are talking about a free service – no fee to be paid.

If my company should let every teacher or student who want to view the programmes get a free

access to the materials I need to organize the service to avoid a competition with the daily users of the archive: NRKs producers. And I need a room or two for the users, I need a cutting table to view 16 mm and 35 mm films, I need cassette players for tapes called: Sony Betacam, vhs, Betacam SP, Digital Betacam and DVD just to mentioned some equipment. What about the programmes already stored? When a new user intend to view a programmes for days I need to make a copy of the programme or the film for him. Why you must ask? Why do you need to copy the programmes? The answer is easy to give: We do have only one copy of the transmitted programme and we try to avoid viewing of the original tapes. We need a viewing copy. And Now I am talking about those who has time and the opportunity to come to the archive daily for service. What about the universities situated outside Oslo? What about Bergen, Tromsø and Trondheim to mention some places? We may let them read the documented information on the computer wherever they live. They could study the collections by getting access to the archives computer. But the written description of a programme is a substitute for the real programme. The researcher want to see how the politician behaves in different situations: The body language of a person is a tool for communication and an important tool. I will recommend you to study professional negotiators and their methods to forward signals to the opposite side of the table during a discussion. The written document, the report of the meeting gives a limited description of the reason for the result. The film or the videotape might tell you why the actions and the results took place. And we do not forget the sound. You may study the written words of the speeches of Sir Winston Churchill. But I think you get a better understanding of the speech by listening to the voice and to see the man in action.

CONCLUSION

To make it possible to use the old programmes for university studies the television companies must invest in staff and equipment to satisfy the outside users. I am talking about the present situation for many companies. By introducing internet we are coming closer to a better support for the user who is living far away from the archive. The policy of digitalization will also be a support for the user. The technic is in favour of the new users of the archives. A revolution has been started. An American whose knowledge in the Norwegian language is equal to his knowledge in other foreign languages – very limited – may now make use of the catalogue written in any foreign language. Systems for translations of languages are already available on the market. Digitalization of the collection of programmes transmitted in Norway in Norwegian should in the future be made available for an American situated in USA by the use of new technology. A new obstacle to be moved is the issue of copyright. You must have the permission to exploit the technology available for you. And what about a national policy to get access to transmitted television and radio programmes? I will advocate for the policy introduced in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. A policy of statutory deposit law of audiovisual materials. The policy of selections of materials introduced in Great Britain and in USA should be abolished.

Ask Winnie the Pooh:

Do you want milk or honey? Both and even more should be the policy of the future.

Thank you for your attention.

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